

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 027391

FOLLOWING SENT SECSTATE WASHDC INFO AMMAN BEIRUT GENEVA
JERUSALEM TEL AVIV USUN NEW YORK FROM ROME 06 FEB 74:

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 1747

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, XF, VT

SUBJECT: VATICAN LABELS "HAARETZ" INTERVIEW WITH VATICAN SPOKESMAN
A DISTORTION

DEPT PASS USINT CAIRO

1. ITALIAN PRESS HAS GIVEN CONSIDERABLE PLAY TO STATEMENTS
VATICAN PRESS SPOKESMAN ALESSANDRINI ALLEGEDLY MADE TO
MRS. HULDS LIBERANOME, CORRESPONDENT OF ISRAELI DAILY "HAARETZ".
MOST STRIKING WERE "HAARETZ" STATEMENTS THAT POPE NO LONGER
CONSIDERS INTERNATIONALIZATION OF JERUSALEM AS REALISTIC AND
THAT WHEN POPE PAUL, IN HIS DEC. 21 STATEMENT TO CARDINALS,
REFERRED TO "LEGITIMATE ASPIRATIONS OF PALESTINIANS" HE MEANT
THAT HE SUPPORTS HUMANITARIAN NOT POLITICAL ASPIRATIONS.

2. ALESSANDRINI INFORMED US FEB. 6 THAT MRS. LIBERANOME HAD
SOUGHT INTERVIEW WITH TOP VATICAN OFFICIAL IN EARLY JANUARY
AND THAT SECRETARIAT OF STATE ASKED ALESSANDRINI TO RECEIVE HER,
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WHICH HE DID FOR 90 MINUTES ON MORNING JAN, 18. ACCORDING TO

ALESSANDRINI, MRS. LIBERANOME, WHO APPARENTLY NORMALLY EMPLOYED BY FLORENCE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, ASKED HIM SERIES OF DETAILED QUESTIONS REGARDING POPE'S VIEWS ON FUTURE OF HOLY PLACES, AND SETTLEMENT OF PALESTINIAN QUESTION. ALESSANDRINI ASSURED US THAT HE DID NOT VARY FROM STANDARD VATICAN FORMULATIONS WHICH INSIST ON "INTERNATIONALLY GUARANTEED SPECIAL STATUTE FOR JERUSALEM," INDIVISIBILITY OF OLD CITY, AND RIGHT OF MEMBERS OF ALL THREE GREAT MONOTHEISTIC RELIGIONS TO LIVE, WORK AND MINGLE FREELY IN JERUSALEM AND FEEL THAT CITY IS THEIR OWN HOME. ALESSANDRINI SAID THAT HE TOLD MRS. LIBERANOME, AS VATICAN OFFICIALS ALWAYS DO, THAT POPE HAS NEVER USED TERM "INTERNATIONALIZATION". TO "HAARETZ" QUESTION AS TO WHY VATICAN HAD NEVER PROTESTED FACT THAT JEWS WERE UNABLE TO VISIT THEIR RELIGIOUS SHRINES IN JERUSALEM WHEN OLD CITY UNDER ARAB CONTROL PRIOR 1967 WAR, ALESSANDRINI GAVE HER WRITTEN STATEMENT SAYING THAT HOLY SEE HAS ALWAYS MADE IT CLEAR THAT IT DID NOT CONSIDER SITUATION IN JERUSALEM AT ANY TIME SINCE 1947 AS NORMAL OR FAIR. ALESSANDRINI TOOK IN WRITING THIS LAST QUESTION AND THREE OTHERS FROM MRS. LIBERANOME AND AGREED TO OBTAIN ANSWERS FROM HIS SUPERIORS AND PASS THEM ON TO HER, WHICH HE DID ON JAN. 23 BOTH BY PHONE AND BY REGISTERED LETTER. ALESSANDRINI SHOWED US ANSWERS TO THESE WRITTEN QUESTIONS PLUS NOTES OF HIS CONVERSATION WITH "HAARETZ" CORRESPONDENT, ALL OF WHICH SUPPORTED HIS ACCUSATION OF "HAARETZ" DISTORTION. ALESSANDRINI FEELS THAT "HAARETZ" HAS CONSCIOUSLY TWISTED HIS ORAL COMMENTS TO CONFORM TO WHAT ISRAELIS WOULD LIKE TO HEAR. HE INSISTED THAT HE IN NO WAY GAVE IMPRESSION OF CHANGE IN VATICAN VIEWPOINT. ALESSANDRINI DOES NOT PLAN TO ISSUE A CLARIFICATION.

3. RELIABLE VATICAN FOREIGN OFFICE SOURCE ALSO INFORMED US FEB. 6 THAT THERE NO DOUBT "HAARETZ" HAD DELIBERATELY TWISTED ALESSANDRINI'S REMARKS. SOURCE SAID THIS HAD BEEN COMMON PRACTICE OF ISRAELIS IN PAST AND THAT NOTHING WAS TO BE GAINED BY VATICAN ISSUING DENIAL OR CLARIFICATION. SOURCE COMMENTED THAT ALL SERIOUS VATICAN OBSERVERS CERTAINLY RECOGNIZE THIS IS CASE OF JOURNALISTIC LICENSE AND THAT IT POINTLESS TO BECOME TOO WORKED UP OVER WHAT YOU READ IN THE NEWSPAPERS.

4. COMMENT: THROUGH HIS PAST WRITINGS ON SUBJECT, IS QUITE OBVIOUS THAT ALESSANDRINI COMPLETELY CONVERSANT WITH OFFICIAL CONFIDENTIAL

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VATICAN VIEWS ON MIDDLE EAST, JERUSALEM AND HOLY PLACES, AND IT THEREFORE MOST IMPROBABLE THAT HE WOULD HAVE MADE STARTLING REMARKS WHICH "HAARETZ" INTERVIEW ATTRIBUTES TO HIM. VOLPE UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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